

BRENTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

ANTI-CYBERBULLYING POLICY

This policy supports our Anti-bullying Policy

STATEMENT OF INTENT

“The internet and mobile phones have such positive power to transform children’s lives for the better. However, when they are misused, they can cause real pain and distress

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly, supportive and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else

Cyberbullying can be:

- Emotional- being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - sexually abusive comments or suggestions
- Homophobic - focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, teasing

OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what cyberbullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on cyberbullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents should know what the school policy is on cyberbullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take cyberbullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when cyberbullying is reported.
- Cyberbullying will not be tolerated.

HOW IS CYBERBULLYING DIFFERENT?

Impact

- In cyberbullying, the audience for the bullying can be very large and reached rapidly. This means that the degree and seriousness, as well as possible risks and repercussions, have to be evaluated differently than in cases of other types of bullying. If content is shared across mobile phones or posted online, it becomes difficult to control who might see it or have copies of it. Not being able to be certain that the event has been contained and will not recur/resurface may make it harder for the person being bullied to gain a sense of 'closure' over an event.
- a single incident can be experienced as multiple attacks. For example, a humiliating video posted to the web can be copied to many different sites. A single instance of bullying, e.g. the creation of a nasty website or the forwarding of a personal email, can have repeated and long-term consequences, as content that is taken off the internet can reappear or be circulated again.
- those being bullied may not initially be aware that they have been or are being cyberbullied. For example, they may not have seen, or be aware of, content about them that has been posted online.

Location

- Cyberbullying can take place at any time and can intrude into spaces that might previously have been regarded as safe or personal. The person being cyberbullied can be left feeling that there is no place to hide and that they might be attacked at anytime.
- You can't walk away from someone who is a cyberbully. It is not possible to walk away from constant phone messages or from a website which has been created to hurt you.

Anonymity

- People who cyberbully may attempt to remain anonymous and this can be extremely disturbing for those that are being bullied. Although the person being bullied may know that their bully is from within their circle of friends or pupils at their school, they may not know the actual identity of the bully, and this can make them uneasy, distrustful and suspicious of all their relationships.

Motivation for bullying

- Some cyberbullying is clearly deliberate and aggressive. However, some instances of cyberbullying are known to be unintentional and the result of not thinking or a lack of awareness of the consequences.

Online behaviours are generally less inhibited than offline behaviour, and some children report saying things to others online that they would not have done offline. Two other factors may be involved here:

- **The distance between the bully and the person being bullied:** The lack of context can mean that what might intended as a joke may not be received as such, and indeed may be deeply upsetting or offensive to the recipient. Additionally, because the bully cannot see the person being bullied and the impact that their message has had, there is less chance for either to resolve any misunderstanding or to feel empathy.
- **A single act can have unintended consequences:** Sending a 'funny' (i.e. embarrassing or humiliating) picture of a fellow pupil (even a friend) to someone could be viewed as a one-off incident, but the nature of the technology means that the sender loses control of the image they have sent. It can be sent on, posted online and have a wide circulation. For this reason a one-off action can turn into a repetitive action and have consequences for the person being bullied far beyond what the original sender may have anticipated.

PROCEDURES

1. Report bullying incidents to staff
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

OUTCOMES

1. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
2. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered
3. If possible, mediation will take place and the students will be reconciled
4. After the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

PREVENTION

We will use a variety of strategies for helping children to prevent bullying, as and when appropriate. These may include:

- writing a code of conduct
- signing a behaviour contract

- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly; making up role-plays
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters
- All of our students sign an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) that outlines acceptable conduct using ICT in school, and agree to follow it every time they use a computer in school.

We believe that educating and promoting anti bullying within our community is the most effective method of preventing bullying and therefore we ensure that we:

- learn about self respect and appropriate behavior towards others through our PSHE programme
- promote anti-bullying around the school
- promote anti-bullying through our virtual community (MLE)
- share this policy with our staff, students and parents

HELP ORGANISATIONS:

Helplines

- Childline – free 24 hour helpline for children and young people.
Tel: 0800 1111.
- Kidscape – run a telephone advice line exclusively for parents and carers giving advice about bullying. Tel: 08451 205 204 (10am-4pm weekdays).
- Get Connected – free confidential helpline for young people (open 1pm-11pm every day). Tel: 0808 8084994.
- Samaritans – helpline for those in distress, offering multi-channel support.
Tel: 08457 90 90 90. Email: Jo@samaritans.org.
SMS text: 07725 909090.

Useful websites

- **Childnet** – a range of resources for primary and secondary schools, for children and young people, for teachers and for parents (www.childnet-int.org).
- **StopText bully** – a website dedicated to mobile phone bullying, contains advice for young people including how to contact your operator (www.stoptextbully.com)
- **Cyberbullying.org** – one of the first websites set up in this area, for young people, providing advice around preventing and taking action against cyberbullying. A Canadian-based site (www.cyberbullying.org).

- **Chatdanger** – a website that informs about the potential dangers online (including bullying), and advice on how to stay safe while chatting (www.chatdanger.com).
- **Anti-Bullying Alliance** – the Alliance brings together over 60 organisations into one network with the aim of reducing bullying. Their website has a parents section with links to recommended organisations who can help with bullying issues
<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>
- **The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)**, - has produced a set of resources around internet safety for secondary schools called Think U Know, see. CEOP also provide resources and training in delivering the Think U Know presentation in schools. www.thinkuknow.co.uk